

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

### 1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

historic      Howes House

other      Grossman Brothers' House (preferred)

### 2. Location

street and number    104 Lynch Street      ☐ not for publication

city, town      Rockville      ☐ vicinity

county      Montgomery

### 3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name      J. Dante and Jennifer Ramarui

street and number    104 Lynch Street      telephone    301/ 315-0450

city, town      Rockville      state    Maryland      zip code    20850

### 4. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.    Montgomery County      liber    23900    folio    623

city, town      Rockville      tax map    GR22      tax parcel    Lot 3 Block 7      tax ID number    00231143

### 5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District  
☒ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District  
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register  
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER  
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT  
☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### 6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input type="checkbox"/> recreation/culture	
		<input type="checkbox"/> religion	
		<input type="checkbox"/> social	
		<input type="checkbox"/> transportation	
		<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	
		<input type="checkbox"/> unknown	
		<input type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources  
previously listed in the Inventory

\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

Inventory No.

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### Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

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Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

### Summary Description

The Howes House located at 104 Lynch Street is a 2-story Tri-gabled Ell wood frame building. The eave-oriented section of the façade has been built out to the wall plane of the façade gable, and wraps around the west elevation, projecting out from the wall on the first floor level. The rear gable wall is extended on the west side by a square addition that fits in the 90-degree angle of the rear elevation of the T.

### Comprehensive Description

The property is sited at an angle to the street edge rather than perpendicular to the street, suggesting it was built to orient to a former alignment. The setback from the sidewalk is minimal and an asphalt driveway abuts the east elevation. The property contains several mature trees and ornamental trees and shrubs, along with a three-bay shed roofed wood garage.



Façade, east elevation

The moderately sloped roof is covered with green asphalt shingles and is pierced by a corbelled out chimneystack centrally located astride the eave-oriented roof's ridgeline. Purlins are evidenced under the gable eaves and the gable fascias contain rectangular panels with molded surrounds. The gable walls are clad in fish-scale shingles and contain small square attic windows under the gable peaks.



South elevation gable

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 7 Page 1

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West elevation (rear) and north



North and east (façade) elevations

Plain end boards and corner boards define the wall planes, which are predominantly with German siding. Two exceptions to this are the rear gable, which is aluminum sided (and also lacks the gable level detailing evidenced elsewhere) and the T-111 covering the lower half of the eave oriented facade wall. In addition, a brick facing apron wall runs along the length of the façade.

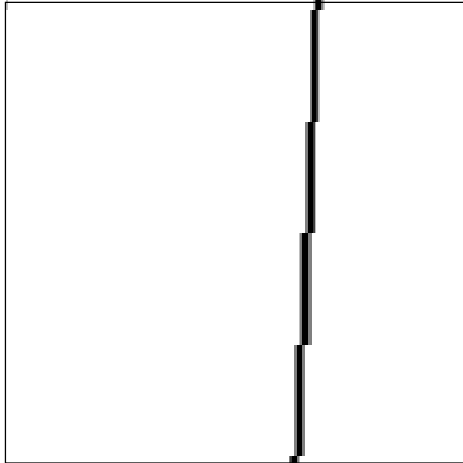
The windows have plain-faced surrounds and appear to be predominantly original. The façade gable windows are paired 1/1 sash with tall narrow proportions. Other historic windows are 2/2 light double-hung sash, except for one west elevation 1/1 window set in a 45-degree wall that ends the wrap around from the projecting wall. Non-original windows are located in the rear aluminum sided gable wall, and a modern vinyl window is set in the first floor of the east elevation wall.

A slightly angled wood water table board is visible above the foundation in some sections of exterior. The original foundation material appears to be fieldstone, but the brick facing masks it along the façade and the foundation under the aluminum sided rear gable is parged with concrete. The front and rear doors appear to be modern, as is a wood deck off the back gable.

The 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance map shows the second story eave oriented addition, and the projecting 1 story section on the west elevation. The north or rear elevation shows a building footprint different from the current structure. The one-story appendage off the rear wall is further west than the current two-story extension. The depth of the rear elevation (how far the building extends toward the rear lot line) is greater in the 1949 footprint than currently. Clearly, the rear elevation of 104 Lynch Street has been altered. The garage (A. is the Sanborn map symbol for auto house or private garage) had an addition on the east side, which has been removed.

# Trust of form

Inventory No.



It appear to be inappropriate and perhaps non-historic alterations to the  
on the Grossman family occupied the house. It is unlikely, however, that  
eave-oriented first floor of the façade is from the same period. Alterations  
larger scale, but these are not apparent from the street.

The rear property line is three bays wide and has a shed roof, which is in poor  
evident and the openings have chamfered corners. Vertical board siding  
and diagonally running unpainted siding covers the rear and east elevations.



3-Bay garage along rear lot line

## 8. Significance

Inventory No.

Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/	<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> military	other:

<b>Specific dates</b>	1904, 1925-1957	<b>Architect/Builder</b>	Harry Howes (potentially)
<b>Construction dates</b>	1904		

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☒ Maryland Register

☐ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

### Significance Summary

The Bessie and Harry Howes House is associated with the early development of the West End Park subdivision and was the home of brothers Israel and Samuel Grossman, owners of DGS grocery store in Rockville from 1920 – 1960, and one of the original Jewish families in Rockville. Because the commercial section of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Rockville has been razed, the homes of the business owners are the few remaining buildings associated with this aspect of small town life. The house, although altered, has defining elements of Queen Anne architecture and is representative of the Historic Resource Management Plan, Historic Context 6: Maturation and Expansion of the County Seat: 1873 – 1931. The property is being nominated for historical and cultural significance C: exemplifies the cultural, economic, social, political or historic heritage of the County and its communities, and architectural and design significance A: embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

### Historical Narrative

In 1873, Rockville annexed land west and south of the City limits. Henry Copp purchased 183 acres (old Anderson farm) from Rockville Academy trustee John Vinson in 1889, forming the 520-acre West End Park. The 1890 subdivision plat filed by Copp indicates the property was platted as two separate lots: Lot 3 and Lot 29. In addition, Lot 4, which faced Anderson Street was a long narrow lot like the others on the street. This had the effect of decreasing the lot depth of the subject property, putting the rear lot line in front of the current garage structure.

In June 1900, Albert and Helen Stabler, Tarlton and Rebecca Stabler purchased the property, taking out a \$6,000 mortgage from the Saving Institution of Sandy Spring, Maryland. The Mortgage or Deed of Trust<sup>1</sup> specified that if the borrower defaulted on one payment, the entire sum would be due; failure to pay the entire sum could result in the public auction of the property by trustees of the bank, Alban G. Thomas and William W.

<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Property Records, Deeds, Liber 13 Folio 444-5.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name

**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 1

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Moore. A 1903 deed indicates ownership by Ellen and Marcus Thomas, suggesting that the Stablers may have defaulted on the mortgage and the Thomas family acquired the property.

The property conveyed from Ellen Thomas and Marcus C. Thomas of Washington to Bessie Howes in 1903 for \$75, (the price of the lot<sup>2</sup>) 8,925 square feet of land "Lot 3 Section 7 and heretofore known as the Julius West Farm and now known as the West End Park"<sup>3</sup>. Property tax assessment records for 1904 indicate improvements on the lot valued at \$650, with the total value at \$725.

Harry Howes was born in Maryland in 1874, according to his 1918 draft registration card. The 1910 census records state that he and Bessie L. Howes had been married for 10 years. They had two sons, Lloyd., born 1903, and Russell, born in 1905. The 1918 Nelson's Directory lists Harry G. Howes as a carpenter living on Laird near Commerce.<sup>4</sup> The 1920 census records identify Harry as a builder and carpenter.

However, given his profession, it is reasonable to speculate that Harry Howes constructed his house on Laird (now Lynch) Street. With a new baby and another child anticipated, the Howes probably were seeking more spacious living quarters. There is no record to date to confirm that Harry Howes built his house. They lived at this location until 1926. After selling off adjacent lots they owned, they sold their house to brothers Israel and Samuel Grossman. The house was valued at \$2,000, with the land valued at \$200 and 'other building' listed at \$460<sup>5</sup>.

The Grossman brothers ran a grocery and dry goods store on East Montgomery Avenue from 1920 to 1960. They lived at the Lynch Street house until 1957. Will and Louise Stackhouse acquired the house and then conveyed the lot and house to Will Stackhouse Jr. and Louise S. Stackhouse. The house was then conveyed to Otis W. Beall and Hilma R. Beall.<sup>6</sup> The deed indicates that the Bealls took out a mortgage with Northwestern Savings & Loan for \$13,600. The house stayed in the Beall family until 1996 when it was acquired by Sara M. Donohue and David G. Sweiderk. The current owners, J. Dante and Jennifer Ramarui, purchased the property in 2002.

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<sup>2</sup> Notes in files of Peerless Rockville, Eileen McGuckian

<sup>3</sup> Montgomery County Property Records Deeds, Liber 24 Folio 374.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson's Washington Suburban Directory of Maryland and Virginia Towns Adjacent to the District of Columbia, compiled and published by Justus C. Nelson, Washington DC, 1918. Commerce is now West Montgomery Avenue. The section of Laird Street where Harry Howe lived is now Lynch Street.

<sup>5</sup> District 4 Montgomery County Tax Assessment, 1925.

<sup>6</sup> Montgomery County Land Records, Deeds, Liber 2364 Folio 473.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name

**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 2

---

Context: Social History

Israel and Sam Grossman were born in Germany and immigrated to Baltimore. In 1919, they joined their brother Philip who ran a store in Rockville with his cousin, Benjamin David Steinberg.<sup>7</sup> The Steinbergs were reportedly one of the first Jewish families in Rockville.

Benjamin David Steinberg came to America when he was approximately 13 years old and he and a cousin worked as peddlers in the North Carolina mountains. He then came to Baltimore and met Jacob Epstein, who had come from the same town in Lithuania as Ben's parents.<sup>8</sup> As a well-established wholesale jobber in Baltimore, he brought people from Europe to America and found places for them to work. Jacob found a place for Benjamin David Steinberg in Rockville, or suggested he start a business in the town. Mr. Steinberg and his new bride came to Rockville in 1908. The mayor of the town, Roger Spates, provided financial assistance to Steinberg and helped him open a small grocery store in a building owned by Miss Ella White.<sup>9</sup>

At first Steinberg sold groceries. Like many of the retail businesses, he was dependent on the farming community around the town. When farmers started asking for work shoes and clothing, he took on a line of clothing. Steinberg's business grew into a country department store and the Grossman brothers took over the grocery business, buying a property next to Steinberg's first store and opening Grossman's DGS.

The business was co-owned by brothers Samuel and Israel. They had a twice-daily delivery service and took phone orders. Billing was casual – people would pay up at the end of the month. Saturdays were always busy with farmers coming in and placing their orders, going out to dinner and picking up their goods on their way out of town. The Grossman grocery store had accounts with Chestnut Lodge, St. Mary's Church and Dr. James and Irene Lyon (Glenview Mansion).

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<sup>7</sup> Ben David Steinberg and his wife had immigrated to the United States from Russia and Lithuania, respectively. They came to Rockville via Baltimore in 1908 and opened a general store at 241 E. Montgomery Avenue with the family's first residence located in an apartment above. (Jeffs, Jeannine, Stienberg interview and McGuckian, Eileen, "Seasonal memories")

<sup>8</sup> The Grossman family, who were related to the Steinbergs were said to have come from Germany or Russia, -- secondary source oral interviews and obituaries differ.

<sup>9</sup> Oral history, Joseph Steinberg, Bethesda Maryland, "Rockville: Identity in Change" project, page 20 –21

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 3

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Grossman Bros. E. Montgomery Avenue  
Malcolm Walter collection, courtesy of Peerless Rockville

Samuel and Bertha's son Louis (Lou) L. Grossman was born in 1920. He attended grade school at the Rockville Academy and graduated from Richard Montgomery High School in 1939. He remembers that there were only six families in the neighborhood. In World War II, Lou served in the Coast Guard and participated in combat off the North African shore. After the war he returned to Rockville and became the second generation to run the store.<sup>10</sup> In 1946, he married Bernice Goldstein, who later became the first Executive Director for the Rockville Chamber of Commerce.

Lou Grossman did not recall any anti-Semitism in Rockville, but did remember that there were only three Jewish girls in town and ten Jewish boys. Many of the religious gatherings took place in Steinberg's store, including instruction from a Rabbi who came twice a week from Washington.

Lou remembered strangers and traveling salesmen taking part in religious ceremonies in order to have the 10 Jewish men required for a minyan. Joseph Steinberg recalled on one occasion they had trouble getting a minyan together so "we converted one guy real fast, Percy Soper, was clerking in our store. We put a cap on him and he became Jewish right away. That was good fun."<sup>11</sup> Rockville's first synagogue, Beth Tikva, was not established until 1957.

Small, locally owned and family run businesses were the anchors of small town commercial districts throughout the county, before the automobile dominated social and economic life. A family owned business was integrated into Rockville's social and civic life -- the Grossman Brothers' store served as the local Democratic Party

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<sup>10</sup> "Louis L. Grossman, Grocer" *The Washington Post*, 4 June 1997.

<sup>11</sup> Oral History Joseph Steinberg, Bethesda Maryland. Jeannine Jeffs, "Rockville: Identity in Change" project March 12, 1984

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name

**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 4

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Headquarters. Lou Grossman recalled, “Customers were treated as friends”.<sup>12</sup> Like other local merchants they belonged to the Chamber of Commerce and attended the Chamber’s outing every year, when “all the stores would close and the families would get together”. There was no real sense of bitter competition between the local businesses. Louis remembers Grossman Brothers getting extra bags when needed from the A&P store, which was two doors down from theirs.

Suburban malls, notably Congressional Plaza, impacted the store’s business. At this time, Rockville was rapidly becoming a suburban bedroom community of the Washington DC metropolitan area. The urban renewal project for the downtown resulted in many of the existing businesses closing. The Grossman property was condemned but no demolition date given. The businesses were offered first choice in the proposed Rockville Mall, but couldn’t wait that long. The urban renewal project, combined with a family illness, prompted the family to close the store in 1960, after 40 years in Rockville.<sup>13</sup>

Although the commercial structures on Rockville’s main street (East Montgomery Avenue) are gone, the merchants’ homes remain. These houses are evidence of the connection between the small business owners and their community. They are significant aspects of the social and economic fabric of Rockville as a small town.

The Howes House evidences several defining characteristics of a vernacular interpretation of the Queen Anne style. The detailing on the fascia and the fish scale shingles covering the gable walls are typical of the style, which stressed ornamentation and variety of textures. The vertical emphasis of the massing was also a common element of the style. Smaller elements, such as the small square gable windows and the corbelling on the chimneystack also reflect the style. The German siding, the plain faced corner boards and the window surrounds are characteristic of vernacular architecture. Unlike the more high style Queen Anne houses along Montgomery Avenue, the Howes House represents a less pretentious example of late Victorian era architecture.

Other tri-gable ells include the 1887 cottage at 314 West Montgomery Avenue and the Dr. Willson Cottage at 10 Thomas Street (1890). Other historic houses within the city have this basic form, but tend to have corner towers or a more generous massing associated with the grand scale of the West End Park development along West Montgomery Avenue.

The Howes House evidences the historic integrity needed to convey its association with early twentieth century architecture and the Grossman family tenure. Architectural elements that define the Queen Anne style, such as the fish shingle gable, decorative frieze board, and corbelled chimneystack are evident. The tri-gabled house form and the plain board trim pieces reflect the vernacular interpretation of the style. The 1949 Sanborn Map

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<sup>12</sup> Oral Interview Louis L. Grossman, conducted by Jeannine Jeffs, February 27, 1984, “Rockville: Identity in Change” project Rockville, Maryland.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name

**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 5

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indicate the current façade form existed during the Grossman occupancy, although the facing on part of the façade has been changed. The majority of the elevations are composed of historic material and the Howes House conveys it's association with the early twentieth century small-town Rockville.

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 6

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### Chain of title

**1925 ( L 378 F 472) Howes transferred to Grossman Brothers, Lot numbered 3 on block 7 and the rear 70 feet by full width of lot numbered 4 on block 7 lying adjoining and immediately in the rear of said lot numbered 3 in that subdivision of land.**

**Brothers Israel and Samuel Grossman, owners of DGS grocery store in Rockville, from 1920 – 1960**

**1957 (L 2364 F 473) Will Stackhouse Jr. and Louise S. Stackhouse conveyed Lot 3, Block No. 7 of the West End Park to Otis W. Beall and Hilma R. Beall, 8,125 square feet. Beall's took out a mortgage with Northwestern Savings & Loan for \$13,600.**

**1996 (L 17298 F 1) Hilma R. Beall conveyed to Donohue, Sara M. and Sweiderk G. David Lot 3 Block 7 for \$185,000**

**2002 (21449/ 789) Sara M. Donohue and Sweiderk G. conveyed to Ramarui, Jennifer G. & Joseph D Lot 3 Block No. 7 for \$431,500.**

# Maryland Historical Trust

## Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

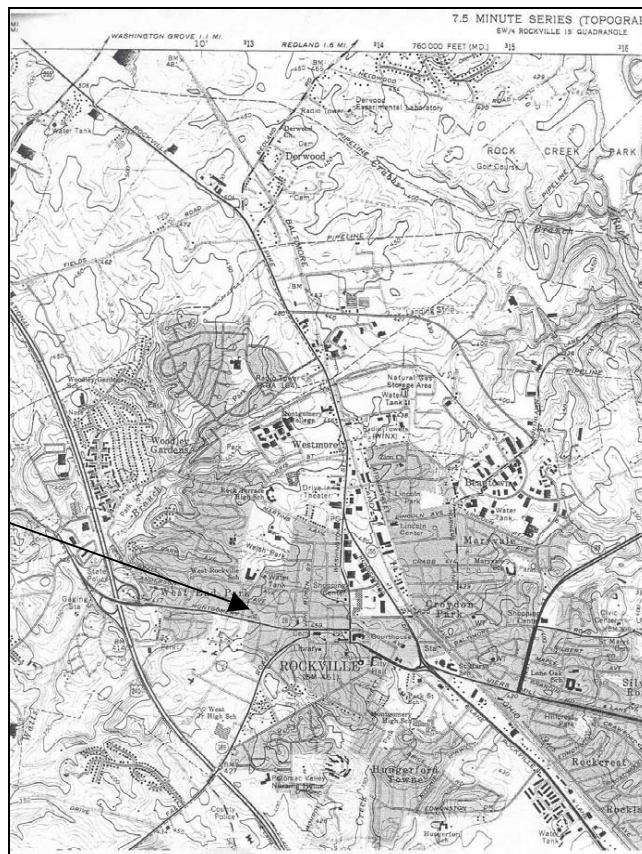
Name  
Continuation Sheet

Number 8 Page 7

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Vicinity Map

104 Lynch



# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name

**Continuation Sheet**

Number 8 Page 8

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## 9. Major Bibliographical References

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Inventory No.

Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation Records, Montgomery County Plat and Land Records, Montgomery County

Oral Interview Joseph Steinberg, Bethesda Maryland. Jeannine Jeffs, March 12, 1984.

Oral Interview Louis L. Grossman, Rockville Maryland, Jeannine Jeffs, February 27, 1984.

Nelson's Washington Suburban Directory of Maryland and Virginia Towns Adjacent to the District of Columbia,,  
compiled and published by Justus C. Nelson, Washington DC, 1918.

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## 10. Geographical Data

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Acreage of surveyed property .255 acre

Acreage of historical setting

Quadrangle name Rockville (MD)

Quadrangle scale: 1:24,000

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

Monument Park, Tax Map GR12, PT LT 4 West End Park

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## 11. Form Prepared by

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name/title	Jeffrey Winstel, AICP, Historic Preservation Planner III		
organization	City of Rockville	date	April 12, 2007
street & number	111 Maryland Avenue	telephone	240/314-8232
city or town	Rockville	state	Maryland

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Maryland Department of Planning  
100 Community Place  
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023  
410-514-7600

# Maryland Historical Trust Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.

Name  
**Continuation Sheet**

Number 9 Page 1

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